

YWCA New Britain Sexual Assault Crisis Service
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Testimony of Nina I. Vázquez, Assistant Director for the Sexual Assault Crisis Service
IN SUPPORT OF BILL HB 5593: AAC DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Honorable members of the Committee, my name is Nina Vázquez, and I am the Assistant Director for the YWCA New Britain Sexual Assault Crisis Services (SACS). SACS provides free and confidential counseling services to victims of sexual assault and their loved ones (children, adults and the Latino community). I have worked for SACS for eight years and have had the opportunity to work with victims of sexual assault from ages 6 to 60. Each year I continue to empower these wonderful men and women, while ensuring they are not alone.

In my experience, majority of my clients have known their perpetrator before their assault happened. However, even though my clients have known their perpetrator, they were still not able to obtain a restraining order due to the perpetrator not being a family member or someone the client had a romantic relationship with. Being denied a restraining order has oftentimes turned my clients away from continuing on with reporting their assault. They are not only being denied the right to safety, but they are continuing to be re-victimized by the same perpetrator and also the system. For any victim, restraining orders can provide a sense of security and protection within a situation out of their control. Granting a restraining order to a victim, allows that victim to slowly gain back control of his/her life.

I am in full support of HB 5593: AAC DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT for all victims of sexual assault and domestic violence no matter who their perpetrator may be. I hope this helps the Committee to see the importance of making restraining orders more accessible and the Committee joins us in supporting Bill HB 5593. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Nina I. Vázquez
Assistant Director
YWCA New Britain Sexual Assault Crisis Service